

9-08/JTN

FREEHILL HOGAN & MAHAR, LLP  
Attorneys for Third-Party Defendant  
SAFMARINE, INC.  
80 Pine Street  
New York, New York 10005  
(212) 425-1900  
Justin T. Nastro, Esq. (JN-2776)  
Manuel A. Molina, Esq. (MM-1017)

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----X  
BENCHMARK EXPORT SERVICES, INC.,

Plaintiff,

07 CV 9446 (SHS)

- against -

AMERICAN TRANSPORT LOGISTICS, INC.,

***SAFMARINE'S ANSWER TO  
COMPLAINT OF PLAINTIFF  
BENCHMARK***

Defendant.

-----X  
AMERICAN TRANSPORT LOGISTICS, INC.,

Defendant/Third Party Plaintiff,

- against -

SAFMARINE, INC.,

Third Party Defendant.

-----X  
  
Third-Party Defendant, SAFMARINE, INC. (hereinafter "SAFMARINE"), by its attorneys Freehill Hogan & Mahar, LLP, answering the Complaint of Plaintiff BENCHMARK EXPORT SERVICES, INC. (hereinafter "BENCHMARK"), alleges upon information and belief, as follows:

1. Admits that this is an admiralty and maritime claim within the meaning of Rule 9(h), and denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the remaining allegations in Paragraph 1 of the Complaint.

2. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 2 of the Complaint.

3. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the remaining allegations contained in Paragraph 3 of the Complaint.

4. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to Paragraph 4 of the Complaint.

5. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 5 of the Complaint.

6. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 6 of the Complaint.

7. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 7 of the Complaint.

8. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 8 of the Complaint.

9. Denies knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief with respect to the allegations contained in Paragraph 9 of the Complaint.

10. Denies each and every allegation contained in Paragraph 10 of the Complaint.

11. Denies each and every allegation contained in Paragraph 11 of the Complaint.

12. Denies each and every allegation contained in Paragraph 12 of the Complaint.

13. Denies each and very allegation contained in paragraph 13 of the Complaint.

**AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

**FIRST AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

1. The Complaint fails to state a claim and/or cause of action against SAFMARINE upon which relief can be granted.

**SECOND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

2. The shipment described in the Complaint was received, loaded, carried, discharged, and/or delivered subject to the terms, conditions, limitations, and exceptions of the United States Carriage of Goods by Sea Act ("COGSA"), 46 U.S.C. Sec. 1300 et seq., and/or the Limitation of Vessel Owner's Liability Act ("Limitation Act"), 46 U.S.C. Sec. 181 et seq., and/or the Harter Act, 46 U.S.C. Sec. 190 et seq., and/or other legislation pertinent to this carriage. If any loss, damage or shortage resulted to the goods, which is denied, it was due to a cause or causes for which SAFMARINE is not liable by virtue of the terms of the aforementioned legislation.

**THIRD AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

3. The shipment described in the Complaint was received, loaded, carried, discharged and/or delivered subject to the terms, conditions, exceptions and limitations of certain dock receipt(s), bill(s) of lading, tariff(s), charter(s) and/or contract(s) of affreightment, issued for carriage of the shipment, and by which the shipper, owner, consignee and holders of said bills of lading agreed to be and are bound. Any loss, damage or shortage to the goods, which is denied, was due to a cause or causes for which SAFMARINE is not liable by virtue of the terms of said dock receipt(s), bill(s) of lading, tariff(s), charter(s) and/or contract(s) of affreightment, including but not limited to the routing of the vessel.

**FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

4. Any loss, damage or shortage to the goods as alleged in the Complaint, which is denied, arose or resulted from the pre-shipment condition of the goods.

**FIFTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

5. If any loss, damage or shortage resulted to the goods as alleged in the Complaint, which is denied, SAFMARINE is not liable due to the following provisions (either singularly or in combination) of 46 U.S.C. Sec. 1304 (COGSA):

- (a) Act, neglect, or default of the master, mariner, pilot, or the servant of the carrier in the navigation or in the management of the ship;

- (b) Perils, dangers, and accidents of the sea or other navigable waters;
- (c) Act of God;
- (d) Act or omission of the shipper or owner of the goods, his agent or representative;
- (e) Wastage in bulk or weight or any other loss or damage arising from inherent defect, quality, or vice of the goods;
- (f) Insufficiency of packing;
- (g) Insufficiency or inadequacy of marks;
- (h) Latent defects not discoverable by due diligence;
- (i) Any other cause arising without the actual fault and privity of the Defendant and without the fault or neglect of the agents or servants of the Defendant.

**SIXTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

6. Any loss or damage to the goods as alleged in the Complaint, which is denied, occurred when the goods were out of the care, custody and control of SAFMARINE.

**SEVENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

7. Any loss or damage to the goods as alleged in the Complaint, which is denied, was caused by or contributed to by the Plaintiff, the Third-Party Plaintiff and/or other third-parties, and not by SAFMARINE.

**EIGHTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

8. Plaintiff is not the real party in interest or proper party to assert these claims.

**NINTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

9. Plaintiff has failed to include in its pleadings indispensable parties to the action.

**TENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

10. This Court lacks in personam jurisdiction over the Defendant.

**ELEVENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

11. Insufficiency and/or improper service of process over the Defendant.

**TWELFTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

12. SAFMARINE's liability, if any, which is specifically denied, is limited by the applicable dock receipt(s), bills of lading, tariff(s), charter(s) and/or contract(s) of affreightment, and/or SAFMARINE's 46 U.S.C. 1304(5) limitation to \$500 per package, or if the goods are not shipped in packages, \$500 per customary freight unit.

**THIRTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

13. Plaintiff failed to give timely notice of the alleged damage, loss or shortage and/or this claim is time barred as per the applicable legislation and/or terms of the subject dock receipt(s), bill(s) of lading, tariff(s), charter(s) and/or contract(s) of affreightment.

**FOURTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

14. Due diligence was exercised on the part of the carrier to make the vessel and its appurtenances seaworthy, and to make all other parts of the vessel in which goods are carried, fit and safe for their reception, carriage and preservation of said shipment.

**FIFTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

15. Plaintiff failed to minimize or mitigate the damages asserted in the Complaint.

**SIXTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

16. This litigation must be dismissed pursuant to a foreign forum selection clause contained in the applicable bill of lading and/or tariff vesting exclusive jurisdiction in a designated foreign nation.

**SEVENTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

17. The Complaint should be dismissed or stayed pursuant to the forum selection and/or arbitration clause incorporated in the applicable dock receipt(s), bill(s) of lading, tariff(s), charter(s) and/or contract(s) of affreightment.

**EIGHTEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

18. In the event that the Plaintiff can prove damages, SAFMARINE maintains that the Plaintiff failed to mitigate these damages.

**NINETEENTH AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE**

19. SAFMARINE was at all relevant times acting as agent for its disclosed principal, and as such cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage as claimed.

**WHEREFORE**, Third-Party Defendant SAFMARINE, INC. demands judgment dismissing the Complaint herein and that it be awarded all costs, expenses and attorneys' fees incurred in connection with the defense of this action and such other and different relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: New York, New York  
February 8, 2008

FREEHILL, HOGAN & MAHAR LLP  
Attorneys for Third-Party Defendant  
SAFMARINE, INC.

By: 

Justin T. Nastro, Esq. (JN-2776)  
Manuel A. Molina, Esq. (MM-1017)  
80 Pine Street  
New York, New York 10005  
(212) 425-1900

TO: CICHANOWICZ, CALLAN KEANE,  
VENGROW & TEXTOR, LLP  
Attorneys for Third-Party Plaintiff  
61 Broadway, suite 3000  
New York, New York 10006  
Attention: Patrick Michael DeCharles, Esq.  
(212) 344-7042



CASEY & BARNETT, LLC  
Attorneys for Plaintiff  
317 Madison Avenue, 21st Floor  
New York, New York 10017  
Attention: Christopher M. Schierlob, Esq.  
(212) 286-0225